

## Experiential Tourism

# For that unique experience

India is an ideal destination for visitors seeking unique experiences. Leading destination management companies are trying to cash in on with growing number of proponents of Experiential Tourism. **TRAVTALK** gives details.



VIVEK SETHI

There is a single guiding force that motivates over 1 billion tourists worldwide to undertake travel, a quest to attain the most unique experiences. Even, UNWTO defines tourism as a social, cultural and economic phenomenon, which entails the

homes; canoeing through backwaters or even explore rural experience in the Vaikom village of Kerala; private cruises on Hooghly river in Kolkata; change of guard ceremony at The President's House in Delhi or a 'culinary experience in Old Delhi', he added.

Kuoni in India has also stepped into promoting

and charming hospitality, flavoured traditional cooking, stimulating art, intriguing architecture, etc," he added.

The cherry on the cake of experiential form of tourism is its growing popularity with the top-end travellers. "Many high-end clients have also been involved in making volunteer visits to Child care cen-



**Arjun Sharma**  
Managing Director  
LPTI and TUI India

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**Dipak Deva**  
CEO - Destination Management  
India & South Asia, Kuoni

Experiential travel has caught on quite fast. Individuals and small group tours in India are shown a different angle of travel



**Arup Sen**  
Director - Special Projects  
Cox & Kings

Experiential Tourism is gaining, but it should not be conducted at the cost of experiments with safety, health and security

movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal, business or professional purposes. A growing number of these tourists actually have now become proponents of Experiential Tourism and are finding India the best suited destination for the same.

As per **Arjun Sharma**, Managing Director, LPTI and TUI India, "People today like to have more meaningful and unique experiences when they travel to India. In fact, we have seen the number of high-end clients increasing who like to take up such unique experiences as a part of their itinerary or involve in social activities through the CSR foundation of our group."

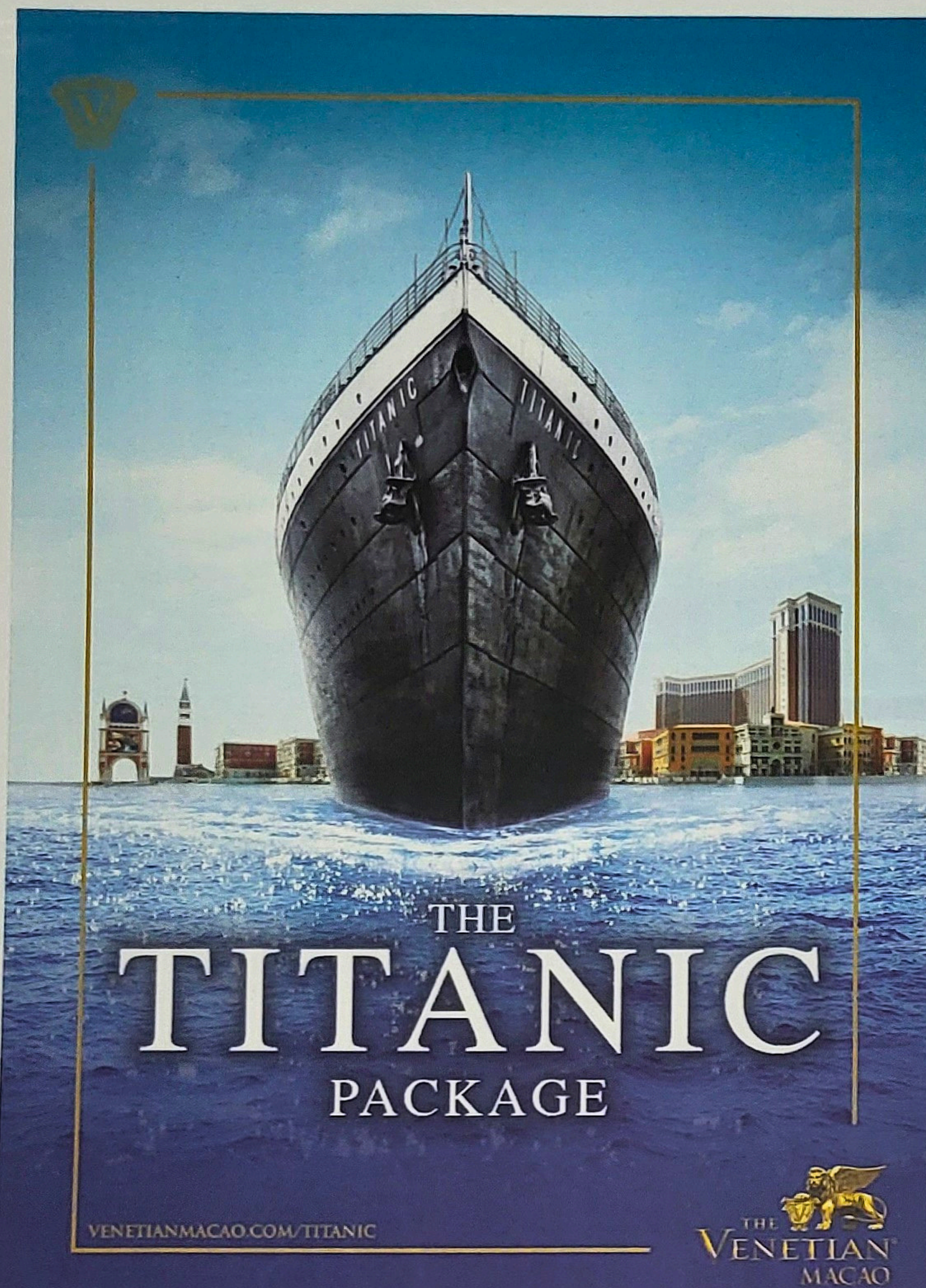
"We offer many unique experiences for clients such as Dining with Nawabs; where one witnesses the Royal families in their palaces and

Experiential Tourism. "Experiential travel has caught on quite fast. One of our products called 'Explore' highlights this trend in depth. This product line for leisure travellers features out of the ordinary tours in India. Individuals and small group tours seeking a truly authentic and sustainable travel experience here in India are shown a different angle of travel," said **Dipak Deva**, CEO - Destination Management, India & South Asia, Kuoni.

"With 'Explore' the basic premise of the product range is to explore a place through one's heart. These tours are also based on principles of Responsible Tourism, social consciousness, environmental concerns and unique cultural experiences that bring diverse communities together and increase the understanding. All this is addition to great outdoors, local customs

ters, old age homes and have contributed in the lives of the underprivileged through our CSR division. One of the most interesting experiences was the Elephant Polo match organised in Jaipur along with lunch for special children belonging to our affiliated NGOs under a generous sponsorship by some clientele of Luxe. Hence, Experiential Tourism is being well received by our high-end clients," iterated **Sharma**.

All said and done, pursuit of building experiential packages should not create unnecessary risks, cautions **Arup Sen**, Director - Special Projects, Cox & Kings. "Experiential and Volunteer Tourism is catching up in a small way. There is no denying the fact that Experiential Tourism is gaining, but this kind of tourism should not be conducted at the cost of experiments with safety, health and security," he added.



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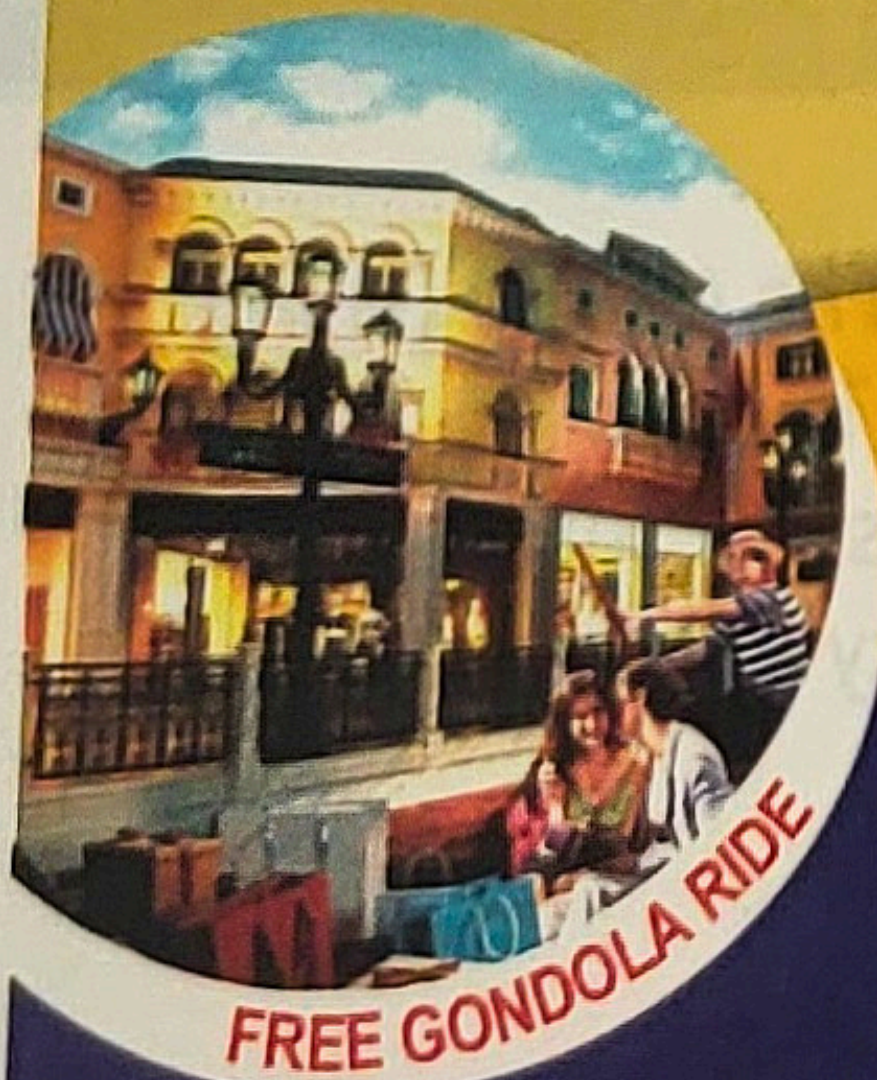
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## FLASHBACK 2012

# Cross hurdles, grow biz

The year 2012 has been a mixed year with many challenges and opportunities. TRAVTALK presents opportunities and challenges that had to be addressed in 2012 by DMCs.

### LPTI and TUI India

**Arjun Sharma, Managing Director, LPTI and TUI India**

Tourism is a fast growing sector and with growth comes many challenges. So being one of the top players of the industry, we constantly face challenges like multiple tax structure and inadequate infrastructure. Also, the market dynamics have changed quite dramatically with the collapse of Kingfisher. But, all these hurdles also push us to continuously innovate ourselves and keep abreast with upcoming trends. It's important to maintain our standards of quality offerings and yet be price sensitive through the products or services that we offer.



### India & South Asia, Kuoni India

**Dipak Deva, CEO, Destination Management India & South Asia, Kuoni India**

The year 2012 has shown both sides of the coin to the inbound tourism sector. The main tourist circuit, the Golden Triangle got a positive direction with the Agra Expressway opening up. Now with the Jaipur-Agra Shatabdi, it seems to have broadened the horizon. Experiential travel is fast catching up. However, looking at the other side of the coin, there has been a slow-down in demand due to the economic recession in key source markets of Europe. The increase in service tax also created an initial stir, while the fluctuation in the foreign exchange gave a positive outcome.



### Thomas Cook India

**Surinder Singh Sodhi, Senior Vice President - Leisure Travel (Inbound), Thomas Cook India**

Key factors like Visa-on-Arrival, enhanced immigration facilities, cultural diversity, exotic locations, wildlife, rich heritage for tourists and culture of India have led to an increase in tourist footfall. Other factors include travel advisory being lifted from Kashmir for some of the important and mature markets to India. Recently, the government has also eased restrictions on tourist visas which had mandated a two-month gap between consecutive visits by foreign nationals.



### Travel Spirit International

**Jatinder Taneja, Managing Director Travel Spirit International**

The key development which created hurdles was the Kingfisher Airlines being grounded for the last so many months. This created scarcity of seats and led to increase in rates in most of the domestic sectors. Overall, the business was not very good in 2012 and the situation has not improved much yet. India is still being considered an expensive destination.



## TECHNOLOGY

### InterGlobe Technology Quotient

**JB Singh, President and CEO, InterGlobe Technology Quotient**

Consistent product innovation has helped us retain our clientele in testing times and win new clientele, as well. We emphasised on training our manpower during 2012 to stay ahead of times and serve our travel clients even better. Travelport has been instrumental in providing technologies that have enabled customers to promote richer content and reduce their cost of doing business.



### Zillious Solutions

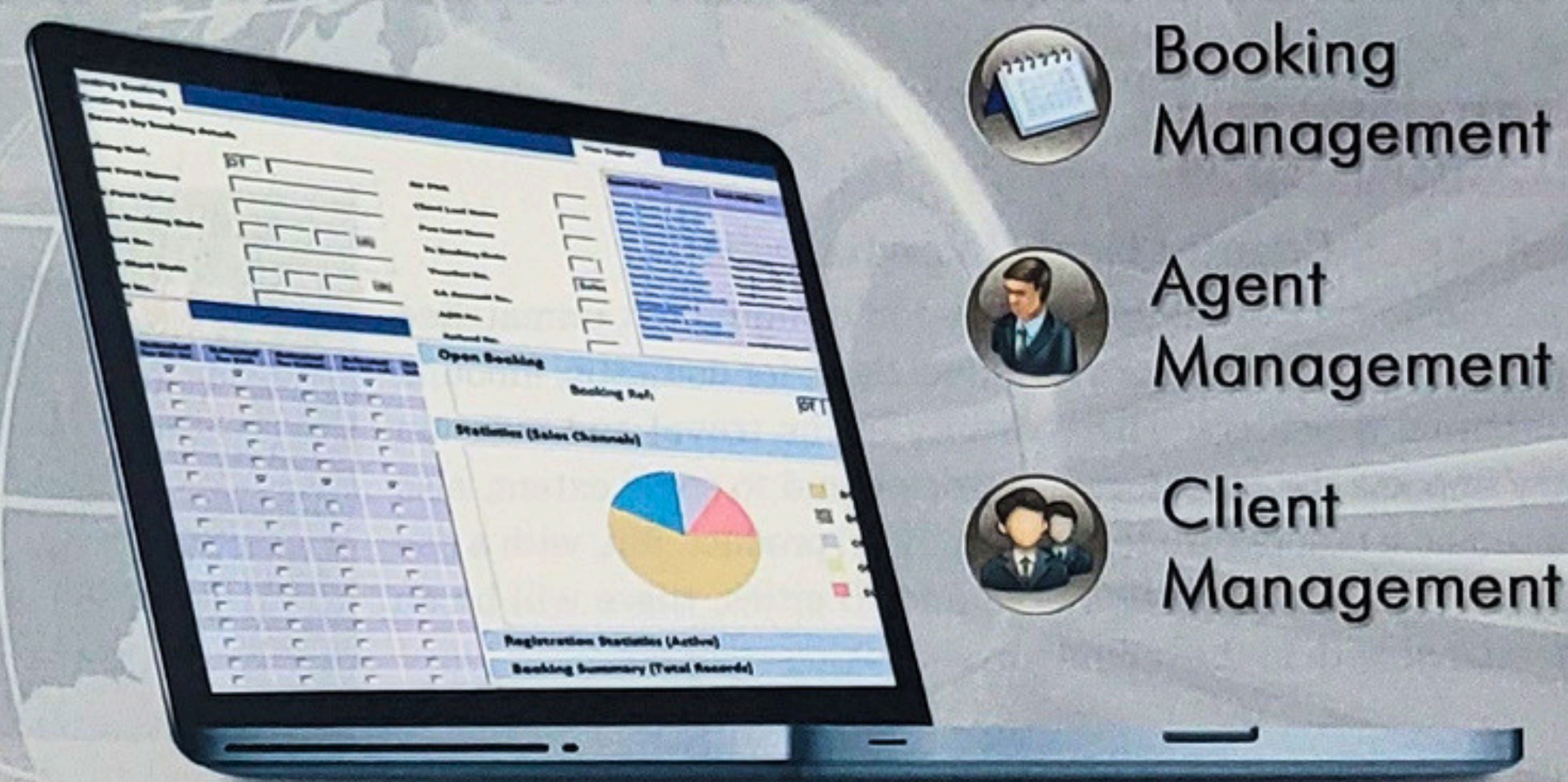
**B Rajan, Director, Sales, Zillious Solutions**

2012 has been good for the organisation with steady growth of over 20 per cent (YoY). Zillious has been successful in drawing the attention of many mid and large-sized TMCs who are keen to streamline, sustain and grow their existing normal/corporate business. Having signed up and operating with some of the large TMCs in India, Zillious is keen to enter the Middle East Market followed by Singapore and Hong Kong. Zillious (Travolution) as a product has evolved to become one of the leading B2E (self booking tool) solution providers.



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- Booking Management
- Agent Management
- Client Management

### Travel Midoffice & Staff Dashboard

Midoffice is a "Central Booking Handling Interface" wherein bookings are received from various sources and are processed until the final delivery of the documents to the customer. The system is strongly integrated with the customized components and third party tools. An administrative interface has been provided to manage various attributes and components.

- ✓ Centralized fulfillment and processing of bookings from various sources
- ✓ Customer Relationship Management tool
- ✓ User friendly virtual booking card for booking Processing
- ✓ Booking Management through various booking queues processing
- ✓ Comprehensive admin panel for managing the business processes
- ✓ Manage complex sale and purchase rules
- ✓ Define commission and markup for various sales channels
- ✓ Real-time supplier connectivity
- ✓ Agent Management System
- ✓ Direct connect to inventories
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**QuadLabs**

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